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ABSTRACT

A study examined the barriers that Missouri women encounter when trying to gain access to better-paying jobs; trends in women's employment status in the state; and the services that women receive from the state's existing employment, training, and supportive services. A total of 2,104 women were contacted through a random statewide household telephone survey of women who are working or have worked and questionnaires that were mailed to women in employment, training, and vocational programs across the state; in addition, 230 interviews were conducted in face-to-face or small group situations. More than one in four respondents reported serious problems in finding out about job openings, nearly one in five reported employment barriers arising from family responsibilities (especially problems in obtaining suitable child care), nearly one in five reported serious problems associated with a lack of education and/or work experience, and nearly one in eight reported problems related to inadequate job benefits. Labor market data indicated that nearly two-thirds of the employed women in Missouri tend to occupy a rather narrow range of traditionally female-dominated occupations, and women appeared to earn less than their male counterparts in practically every occupational category. Although federally and state-funded employment and training programs have benefitted many women throughout the state, many of those who need these services most remain ineligible for them or are not considered appropriate clients. (MN)

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Women and Employment
A Missouri Profile

Summary Handbook

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Women and Employment

A Missouri Profile

Summary Handbook

Prepared by

the Institute of Applied Research
St. Louis, Missouri

for

The Missouri Council
on Women's Economic Development and Training
P.O. Box 118
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
(314) 751-0810

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PREFACE

The study of women and employment in the state of Missouri was a project commissioned by the Missouri Council on Women's Economic Development and Training, Missouri Department of Economic Development and Training, and undertaken by the Institute of Applied Research, with the assistance of AAIM, Inc., under contract number 700839. Research was carried out on this project during May and June, 1987. This handbook is a digest of a four volume report submitted to the Council.

A total of 27 individuals participated in the work on this project, and gratitude must be expressed for all the hard work and long hours put in by so many. A special word of appreciation is due to the many women throughout the state of Missouri who participated in the survey and without whose willing cooperation, insights, and responsiveness this study could not have been conducted.

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INTRODUCTION

Employment has become a central issue for the economic status of women in the United States today. In the last four decades, women have entered the labor force in record numbers: 55 percent of adult women held jobs in 1985, a figure which rose from 33 percent in 1950. If one considers the labor force participation rate of only those women who are 20 to 44 years of age, the figure in 1985 was 71.4 percent. By 1995, the U.S. Bureau of the Census predicts that fully 60 percent of all adult women will be working (U.S. Census, 1986). This increased labor force participation has meant an increase in the number of working women with children. In March of 1985, two out of five working women had children under 18, and 40 percent of these women had children under the age of 6. Moreover, one out of five families with children is maintained by a woman (U.S. Census, 1986).

While an increasing number of women are entering the labor force, many in jobs where men have traditionally predominated, the overall labor market remains sharply segregated by sex. Most women continue to work in traditionally female, low-wage occupations. Moreover, women still constitute a majority of the poverty population in the United States (U.S. Census, 1986). The poverty rate in 1984 for all families maintained by women was 34.5 percent, and was even worse for black and Hispanic female-headed families, whose rates were over 50 percent (U.S. Census, 1986). Only 13 percent of women who worked year-round, full-time in 1984 earned more than $25,000, as compared with 46 percent of men (U.S. Census, 1986). Women's employment and income figures for the state of Missouri are comparable to these national trends.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the reality behind these figures. Specifically, the objective was to uncover the barriers that Missouri women encounter in trying to obtain jobs and/or gain access to jobs which provide greater challenges and rewards. A second purpose was to examine data sources that reflect the status of women in the labor market. A third objective was to review and assess the services women receive from existing employment, training and support programs in the state.

The three parts of this handbook follow the three major parts of the study:

1. An assessment of barriers to employment that women of Missouri face;

2. An analysis of available labor market data relevant to the employment of women; and

3. A review and analysis of existing training and support services available throughout the state.

I. BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Approach

A three-fold research design was developed for this study: 1) A random statewide household telephone survey of women who are working or have worked was conducted. 2) Face-to-face "expert" and focus group interviews were conducted throughout the state. And 3) mailed questionnaires were distributed to women involved in employment, training and vocational programs across the state. Altogether, 2,104 women were surveyed and 230 interviews were conducted in this study. Women in 113 of the state's 114 counties (and the city of St. Louis) participated.

A thorough review was conducted of recent studies and literature on the types of problems women experience in finding jobs and in advancing in them. Based on this review, a list of potential barriers to employment was developed, tested in pilot interviews, revised and built into the instruments used in this study. This list included the following items:

1. Not enough education
2. Lack of skill training
3. Inadequate work experience
4. Being overqualified
5. Being too old or too young
6. Lack of transportation to and from work
7. Personal health problems
8. Family responsibilities
9. Problems with child care
10. Not knowing how to find out about jobs
11. Not knowing the right people
12. Lack of confidence in qualifications
13. Lack of confidence in ability to do job
14. Lack of confidence during interviews
15. Lack of confidence in they way you look
16. Feeling that your place is in the home
17. Conflict with husband's job or career
18. Difficult working hours
19. Inadequate health insurance
20. Inadequate benefits (sick leave, vacation, etc.)
21. Discriminatory reward or salary system
22. Supervisor/Employer who is (was) prejudiced against women
23. A job that required moving
24. A job that required travel

The face-to-face interviews that were conducted verified and supplemented information obtained through telephone interviews and written questionnaires, and provided a greater understanding of the difficult employment-related problems that many women face.

Findings

A. Employment Barriers Reported by Missouri Women

Types and Frequency of Problems. Four out of five women participating in this study reported experiencing one or more barriers to finding jobs, keeping them or advancing in them. The study confirmed that women in the state experience a wide range of work-related problems.

Figure 1 shows the percentages of women in the statewide telephone survey who responded affirmatively to whether they had ever experienced the barriers to employment included in the list presented above.

- o More than one in four respondents reported that they faced serious problems in finding out about job openings and locating suitable employment.

- o Nearly one in five reported employment barriers arising out of their family responsibilities, many due to difficulties in locating suitable child care for young children, and many complicated by difficult working hours.

- o Nearly one in five reported problems associated with a lack of education, job skills and/or work experience.

- o Nearly one in eight reported problems related to inadequate job benefits, such as health insurance and sick leave.

- o Nearly one in ten reported problems related to jobs requiring moving or travel.

- o One in six reported problems related to sex bias and/or harassment.

Seriousness of Problems. Each woman who responded that she had experienced one of the barriers to employment was asked to rate the importance of the barrier on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means a minor problem and 10 means a serious problem. The average (mean) ratings for each item are shown in Figure 2.

Comparison of Figures 1 and 2 show that some of the problems that were mentioned less frequently were nonetheless ranked high in importance. For example, a job that required moving had been a problem to less than 10 percent of the women in the sample, but it was rated as extremely important by the women who mentioned it.

- o Problems over which an individual has little or no control--such as conditions of hire, job benefits, sex discrimination and prejudice in the workplace, and the availability and affordability of child care--tended to be viewed as more serious by the women experiencing them.

Figure 1. Percent Reporting Barriers
(Telephone Survey of Missouri Women)

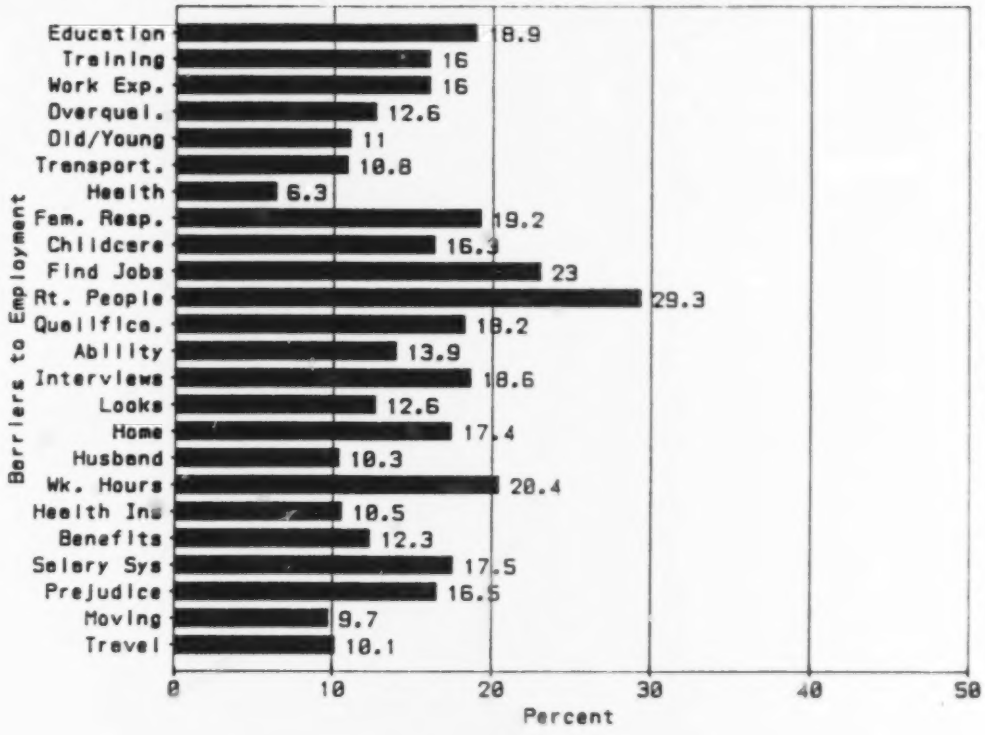
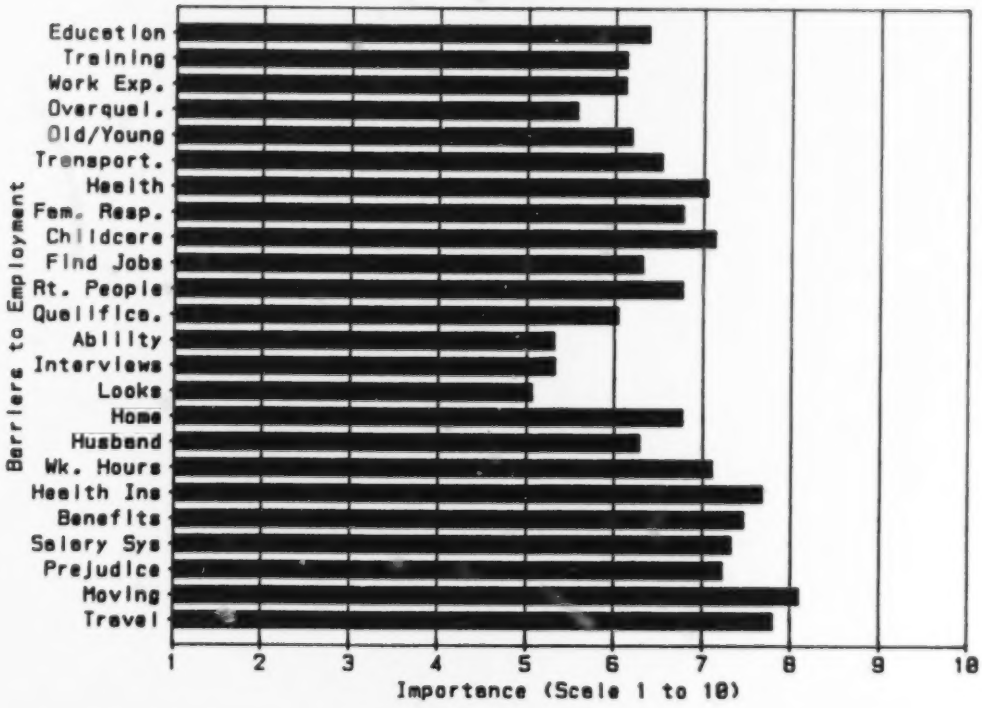


Figure 2. Importance of Barriers
Average Rating
(Telephone Survey of Missouri Women)



- Issues such as family responsibilities and feeling that one's place is in the home were also given moderate to high importance scores.

- On the other hand, a set of other issues about which an individual may feel she can do something or has some control--such as training and job preparedness and self-confidence--tended to be rated lower.

- None of the problems received average ranks of less than five, indicating that they were seldom described as only minor in nature.

B. Barriers Reported by Women with Different Demographic Characteristics

Women with different background characteristics often reported experiencing different barriers to employment or the same barriers with different frequency and intensity.

1. Age. Overall, younger women more often reported experiencing employment barriers than older women.

- Women under 30 years of age more often reported problems related to: too little education; lack of skill training; limited work experience; lack of confidence in qualifications, abilities and during interviews; not knowing how to find out about job openings; and not knowing the right people.

- Women between 30 and 44 years more frequently reported: family responsibilities; child care; feeling (her) place was in the home; difficult working hours; inadequate health insurance; and a discriminatory reward or salary system.

- Women over 45 years more often reported being considered too old for a job.

2. Marital Status. Overall, married women who were not separated indicated fewer employment problems than women who were on their own--separated, divorced, widowed or never married.

- Married women were more likely to experience problems related to family responsibilities and feeling that their place was in the home.

- Non-married women were more likely to report other barriers.

3. Children. Women with dependent children experience a special set of problems with respect to employment that involve their dual careers of homemaker/mother and employee.

- o One in five respondents with a child mentioned problems associated with day care; nearly one in three with two or more children reported such problems.

- o Poorer women more often experienced problems with the cost of day care; professional women more frequently noted serious problems with locating day care that is accessible and of satisfactory quality.

- o Women with two or more children were more likely to report conflicts over feeling that their place is in the home.

4. Income. Women with greater personal income tended to report fewer employment barriers, and vice versa, women with less income tended to experience a greater number of barriers.

- o Women with less income were more likely to experience problems associated with: lack of education; lack of skill training; inadequate work experience; lack of transportation to work; family responsibilities; lack of self-confidence; and feeling their place is in the home.

5. Race. Black women more frequently reported problems with too little education, lack of skill training, work experience, and transportation to work. White women more frequently reported problems with difficult working hours and conflicts over feeling their place is in the home.

6. Education. Women with more than a high school education more frequently noted conflicts with a husband's job or career, difficult working hours, and sex bias on the job. Women without a high school education more often reported problems with too little education, lack of skill training and work experience.

7. Occupation. Women in professional, technical and managerial jobs more often encountered the problems of being considered overqualified. They were also less likely than other women to hold the view that jobs available for women in their regions of the state were of equal quality and pay as the jobs available for men.

When barriers were considered separately and in combination there were three demographics characteristics that accounted for the most difference among respondents. These were **marital status, the presence of children, and personal income.** Women who were single, women with dependent children, and women who were poor reported significantly more employment-related problems.

C. Barriers Reported by Women from Different Special Interest Groups

Differences in barriers to employment experienced by women grouped according to demographic and occupational characteristics were examined. Groupings examined included female heads of

household with dependent children under 18 years of age; welfare recipients (AFDC, Medicaid, or food stamps); women in nontraditional jobs; and, certain women in professional, technical or managerial occupations. The responses of these groups concerning employment barriers are contained in Figures 3 through 6. The categories of barriers are the same as those contained in Figure 1 and a fuller description of each can be found there.

1. Female Heads of Households. Single women with dependent children have a special set of problems regarding employment. They tend to occupy the least prestigious and lowest paying jobs and they tend to have the lowest family incomes. These families are much more likely to live at or below the poverty level. These women and the women on welfare tended to report barriers significantly more frequently than other women interviewed.

- o Not knowing the right people was mentioned by over 60 percent of these respondents; not knowing how to find out about job openings was mentioned by over half.
- o Lack of job preparation (education, training, experience) was mentioned by more than 50 percent.
- o Child care was a major problem, mentioned by slightly less than half of these respondents.

2. Women on Welfare. Women who are on welfare were defined as those receiving AFDC, food stamps or Medicaid benefits.

- o Like the previous target group welfare women tended to respond affirmatively to each question about employment barriers much more frequently than the sample of women as a whole.
- o Issues of not knowing the right people nor how to find out about job openings were mentioned by substantially more than half of these respondents.
- o Job preparedness issues (education, training, experience) were also mentioned by upwards of two-thirds of the women on welfare.
- o Child care was a problem for 45 percent of these women.

3. Women in Nontraditional Occupations. Women working in nontraditional occupations were also of special interest. Essentially these occupations are those in which women constitute less than approximately 20 percent of the workforce. Excluded, therefore, are all clerical, sales and service occupations dominated by women, along with nursing and primary school teaching and traditionally female blue-collar jobs. The women in this study who were in such occupations tended to have much higher earnings than their counterparts in jobs traditionally held by women.

Figure 3. Percent Reporting Barriers
(Female Heads of Household, Children<18)

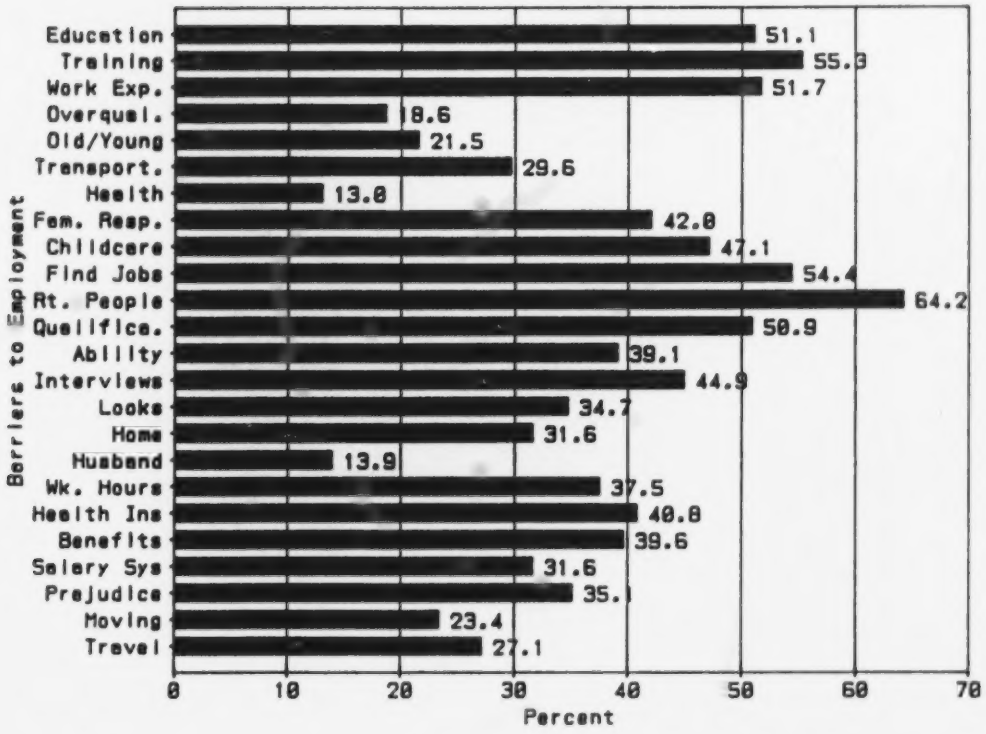


Figure 4. Percent Reporting Barriers
(Women on Welfare)

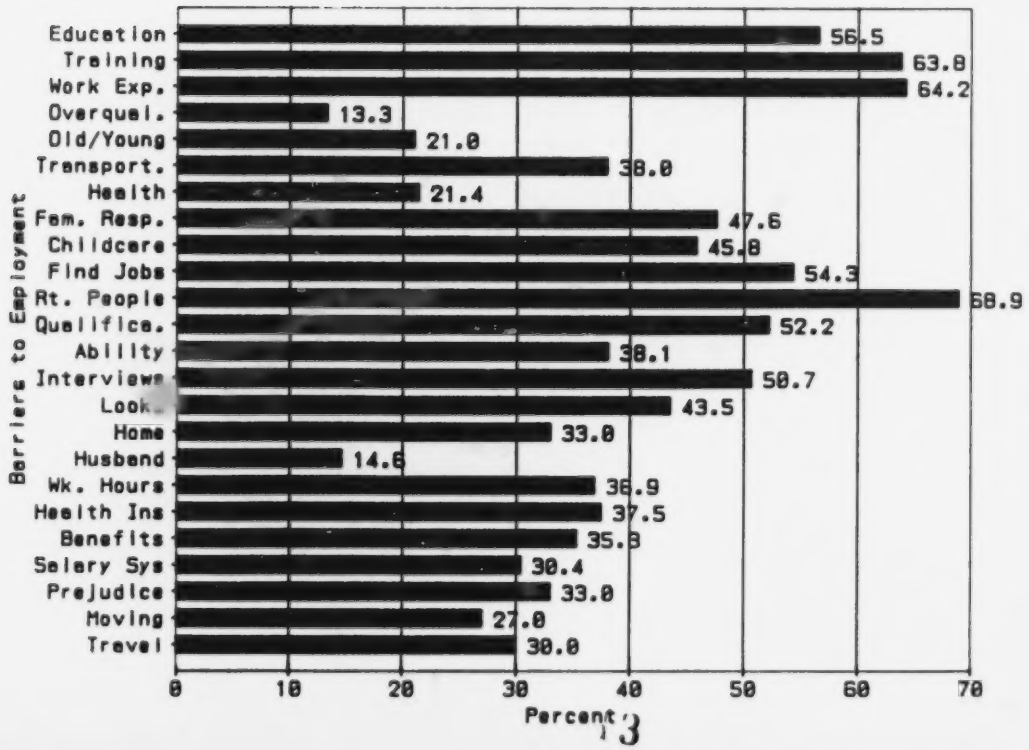


Figure 5. Percent Reporting Barriers
(Women in Nontraditional Jobs)

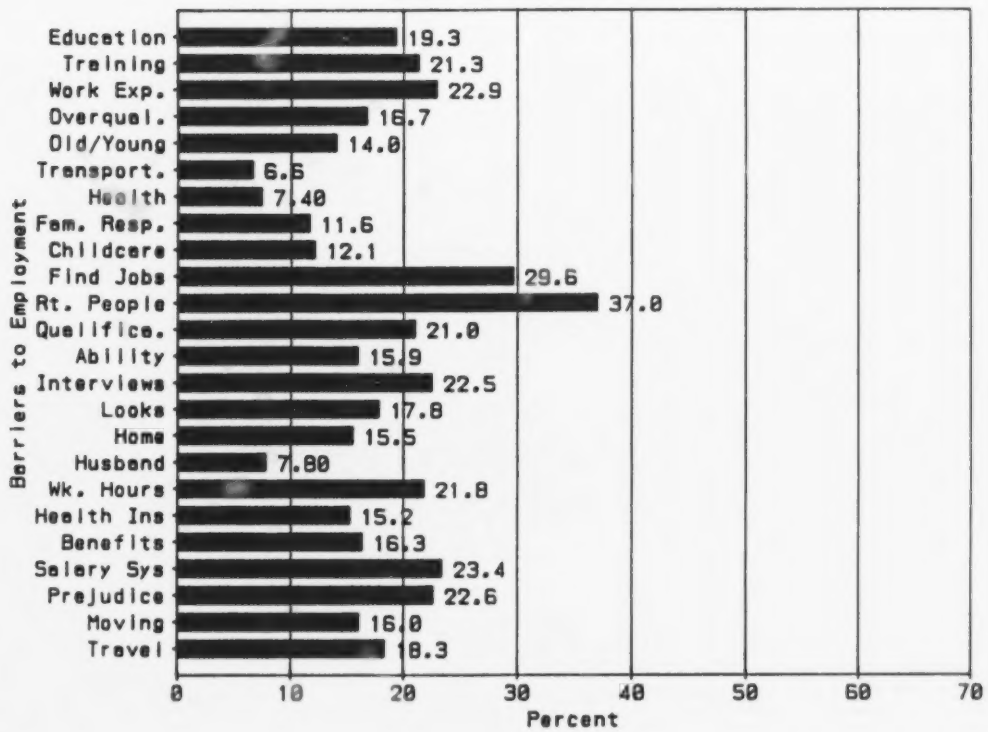
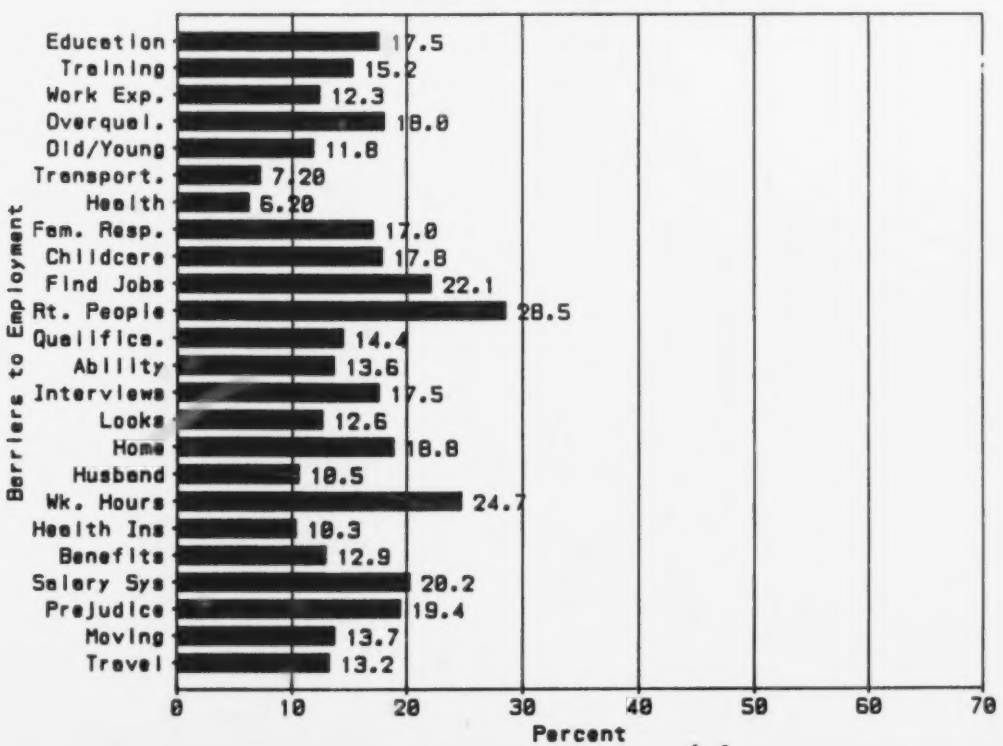


Figure 6. Percent Reporting Barriers
(Professional, Managerial Technical)



- o Like the other groups in this study, women in nontraditional jobs cited problems of not knowing the right people and knowing how to find out about jobs with great frequency (approximately one of three women surveyed).

- o More than one in five reported discriminatory job practices or prejudice by employers and supervisors.

- o About the same proportion cited job preparation issues (education, training and experience) as barriers for them.

4. Professional Women. Women who held professional, technical and managerial jobs described many of the same problems reported by other working women.

- o About one-fourth of these respondents reported difficulty with working hours.

- o Like the other women in this study, a relatively large proportion, between 20 and 30 percent, cited not knowing the right people nor how to find out about jobs as barriers they had experienced.

- o About one in five of these women noted that a salary or reward system that discriminated against women and prejudice on the part of employers or supervisors had been a problem for them.

- o For both this group and the nontraditional women the proportion reporting barriers tended to be lower than the poorer, disadvantaged women. However, they tended to consider their problems to be more serious than the other women.

D. Regional Differences

There were some differences in the responses of women who lived in different parts of the state.

- o Issues centering on training and support appear to be more severe in certain rural areas and in St. Louis City. This may be due to the lack of resources and the sparseness of the resources that do exist in the rural areas. In St. Louis City these problems may reflect a greater number of poor and poorly educated respondents.

- o Family problems also appear to be more severe in certain rural areas. This may be related to the relative lack of resources in these areas that permit women, who are typically principally responsible for child care and housework, to work without undue stress.

- o Clear differences concerning most on-the-job barriers do not occur between geographic region of Missouri. Women appear to experience the problems of lack of health insurance and benefits, employer prejudice and discriminatory salary systems in both urban and rural areas. Moving and travel problems are the exception here, since they were more likely to be mentioned by rural women.

- o Transportation to and from work appears to be a great problem for women in the City of St. Louis.

Discussion

The Informal Network. A substantial number of the respondents to the telephone interview as well as the mailed questionnaires reported that they experienced problems getting jobs because they did not know the "right" people. During the expert interviews and focus group discussions this issue came up very often. The perception was that men are more likely than women to be a part of a communication network that provides information about available job openings. This was seen as having an effect on at least three levels: first, it is generally easier for men to find out about job openings when they occur (and often before they occur and before they are advertised, if they ever are); second, men are more likely than women to find out about jobs that are better paying and have greater potential for career development; and third, men are more likely to be the beneficiaries of the "old boy" network in which friends or the friends of friends are often first in line when openings occur or are created.

We know from research that has been done on the way people locate jobs that the informal network of friends and associates plays a central role. And to the extent that men are more likely to know other men already working in the types of jobs they are seeking they are more likely to find out about openings when they occur. Women, on the other hand, perceive themselves as less likely than men to find out about openings particularly in nontraditional occupations, occupations in which male workers predominate. And they are similarly less likely to be in a position to be recommended by a friend of the employer or personnel director than their male counterpart.

Many women see themselves as excluded from the informal male networks in the workplace as well as in socializing activities among co-workers where men share valuable advice, information and support. One respondent noted: "Company extracurricular activities are often sex segregated." And another: "The informal networking, even something as simple as golf games, or attending social events, are sometimes awkward and not options for women." Being outside this informal work and social network was seen by many women to also greatly restrict advancement on the job and up the career ladder. The situation was viewed as made more

difficult by women not employing a network of their own or not grooming their successors in the same way that male executives often do. One woman said: "Women do not take advantage of mentors, nor mentor others."

Child Care. Problems related to childcare were mentioned very frequently as serious problems for many women. The problem was seen as most acute for women of lesser means who often have difficulties finding adequate, affordable day care for their children. But women with professional careers frequently reported problems locating conveniently located, quality day care services as among the most stubborn and continuing problems they must face.

A related problem to child care is a job with **difficult and inflexible working hours.** Women with children often cannot take jobs in which they must work different shifts or at night, because of child care responsibilities. As one respondent put it: "Family commitments prevent some women from accepting some jobs with odd hours--there is a lack of good child care at night." Another noted the problem of a woman with children of different ages: "You can't take a bus to three different day care centers and then to work."

Family Responsibilities. The responsibilities of rearing and caring for children present working women with a wide set of work-related problems in addition to child care. Starting times for some jobs are a problem, when they conflict with the need to get children off to school or to a bus. Sick children are a special problem for many, especially individuals whose companies will not allow them to use their sick days for their children's illnesses. One respondent noted what working women experience: "Family obligations means doing two jobs--home, children, and career."

The tension caused by competing responsibilities is most acute when one works for an employer that perceives the problems of the dual career as a problem for the company. As one woman said: "Companies are afraid that women will always put their families ahead of their jobs." And another: "Companies fear that women will be undependable because of family responsibilities." And some women themselves express inner conflict over their dual roles. Some feel guilty for working and placing their children in the care of paid caregivers, even in situations in which financial pressures leave them no other alternative. And a number expressed continued confusion over their homemaking and career goals. Sometimes this situation is made more tense by a husband with traditional or, at least, ambiguous attitudes about his wife's role. Even in situations in which a woman's husband accepts her having a working career, there often continues to be the perception and expectation that she has the primary responsibilities for homemaking and child care.

While men are parents and members of families as well, and have responsibilities that arise from these roles, the practical

consequences--from the concerns of employers, the expectations of spouses, and the internalization of social roles--often fall full force on women.

Job Preparedness. Like the women responding in the telephone interviews and the mailed questionnaires, the expert and focus group respondents frequently mentioned problems relating to job preparedness issues: education, skill training, and work experience. A number of these respondents were themselves involved in providing skill training and had strong feelings about its importance for many women. The problems associated to a lack of preparedness was seen as particularly crucial for women from lower socio-economic situations, where the women were more likely to be undereducated and sometimes more poorly educated. The predicament faced by many women of this sort is a lack of funds to pay for the skill training they want and need. While there are available programs and some other sources of support to assist individuals obtain skill and on-the-job training, all who want and need such training are not eligible for the programs or, for a variety of reasons, do not qualify for the assistance, or simply find themselves at the end of a waiting list's queue moving too slowly to do them any practical good.

Structural Problems. In addition to problems related to limited education and work skills, a lack of child care services and inflexible work hours, other structural problems were noted by respondents. One mentioned by a number of women was the veterans' preference in civil service hiring and promotion. Another was the exclusion of traditionally "female" positions from administrative career ladders. And another was the lack of opportunity for skill development and growth. Also mentioned was overt discrimination and labor market conditions.

Labor Market Conditions. Many respondents mentioned problems related to local labor market conditions and a lack of suitable, well-paying, full-time jobs, particularly for women with limited education and work experience. A number of respondents noted that for many women the only type of jobs that are generally available are dead-end ones with no future, jobs in which it is not possible to build a career. In addition to low-pay, these jobs may also involve poor health insurance plans and sick-leave benefits. For a displaced homemaker or single parent such situations are seen to be all too common. And for a woman with dependent children, who must find affordable day care services and whose family requires comprehensive health coverage, the opportunities and options are often very limited.

Sex Stereotyping and Prejudice. A large number of the women interviewed reported problems associated with the stereotyping of women as workers by supervisors and employers who were most often male. This was sometimes perceived and experienced as simple prejudice against women workers--with male employers finding excuses for not hiring or promoting a woman. But it was also experienced in more subtle ways. Cultural stereotypes were

encountered as operating assumptions that justified actions; assumptions such as: women can't handle the pressure; women are not dedicated to their jobs; women are not steady workers; women will quit work to have children; women are not team players; women can't take criticism; women are not ambitious; women are not strong enough physically or emotionally; women employees will only cause problems among the men; men have families to feed.

Many respondents saw women workers caught in a double bind: either she was likely to be perceived as too passive and therefore confirming the prevailing stereotypical attitudes; or she was perceived as being too assertive and as not being a good team player or compatible co-worker or subordinate. The double bind is often the way in which the stereotype is turned into discrimination: being married can be a liability, but so can being single; hiring a parent can be risky, but so can hiring a potential parent; a woman can be too attractive or not attractive enough; too feminine or not feminine enough.

Work History. A related problem is associated with the working woman's work history. If she has a discontinuous work record, if there are periods of her life during which she has not worked, she is most likely to feel the full force of the stereotype. She will often be perceived as either not a serious worker or as one who is not a good hire risk for a company. Whatever her present plans and intentions, her past as represented on the job application form will follow her. Similarly, a woman who is pregnant faces significant barriers whatever her qualifications and long-terms plans may be.

Sexual Harassment. A woman who faces a most difficult dilemma is one who has been the victim of sexual harassment on the job. In the views of respondents, her options are limited. She can leave the job, as we have found many women do. But then she is without employment and job benefits and must begin the struggle again to locate the kind of job she wants and is capable of doing. If she stays and enlists the assistance of supervisory personnel or proceeds through normal grievance channels she may re-attain a situation of normalcy without penalty to herself. However, she may end up a victim twice over by antagonizing personnel in entrenched positions. And if she pursues legal means of redress, she may be cutting off future means for her livelihood in return for a short-term victory and compensation. If she sues her company on the basis of sexual harassment, her chances of employment with other companies in the future shrivel dramatically; this is an action many women workers have found haunts all subsequent job seeking efforts.

Internal Barriers. The expert informants and focus group participants frequently mentioned problems related to intra-personal factors: attitudes, hopes, fears, inner conflicts, confusion, ambiguous feelings. Such feelings were often seen associated with society's socialization of women into traditional female roles, on the one hand, and personal ambitions and

aspirations, on the other, while shaped and constrained by financial pressures and family responsibilities.

A lack of self-confidence was a frequently mentioned internal factor that caused women problems both when seeking employment and in the workplace. The focus of this diminished self-confidence centered most on insecurities about qualifications and abilities. The tendency to want to be completely qualified if not overqualified before approaching prospective employers that has been observed by other researchers was noted by a number of the interviewees.

Other internal barriers reported an unwillingness to take risks, avoidance of competitive or assertive behavior, an overriding desire to please, dependent behavior, fear of success, absence of a career orientation and failure to understand the "politics" of advancement. The dilemma of the stereotype was also seen as exacerbated by some women who want to work but who are seen as having unrealistic expectations and/or work-related attitudes that are self-defeating and barrier-producing. Such attitudes and expectations were seen as most common among individuals with very limited work experience and few marketable work skills.

Occupational Mobility. A job that required relocating presented very serious difficulties to many women, particularly those who are married. It continues to be much more likely that a family will uproot itself to follow the opportunities or demands of a husband's carrier than a wife's. The effect of this is that the career opportunities for a married woman are likely to be more restricted than for a married man. It may also mean that women more often face (and accept) working conditions, wages and job benefits that are less than desirable.

Welfare Bind. Women who are on welfare and dependent on AFDC checks, food stamps and Medicaid benefits are in a special predicament. Many are undereducated or poorly educated, have limited work experience, and are without marketable job skills. Even if they are fortunate enough to participate in a program like JTPA they often end up with a placement in low paying jobs. These women are in a classic dilemma: they cannot improve their lot or that of their children by staying on welfare, but they cannot afford to give up the little protection they have, particularly through the Medicaid program, and take on the costs of child care, by taking a low-paying job--especially, if the job is like many available to them, dead-ended, with little opportunity of advancement and an inadequate insurance plan. For some individuals, what may appear to others to be a reluctance to work is a calculated assessment of the relative costs and benefits of taking a particular job. Few people will proceed willingly along a course of action they perceive to be to their detriment; and this is certainly true of women with young children. The need to extend Medicaid benefits in the cases of the working poor, as has been proposed in Missouri, is the beginning of a way out for people caught in the welfare dilemma.

Professional Women. Women in business and in the professions described experiencing many of the same problems reported by other working women: problems with day care, family responsibilities and the dual career; insurance benefits or sick leave policies that are not adequate; feelings of guilt and diffidence; confronting sexual stereotyping and bias from male supervisors and peers. But for professional women, working at their craft, the problems they encounter can be especially acute. And, according to those interviewed in this study, what they encountered includes: male perceptions of the limited management capabilities of females; ceilings on promotional opportunities; the perception that a competent woman is unique as opposed to the norm; not being taken seriously; limited learning opportunities; being judged too quickly on the basis of appearance; not being allowed to play company politics; the perception that women don't need the money; being omitted from the male established social and office networks; being judged on the basis of the stereotype rather than on performance; patronizing attitudes resulting in assignments of less responsibility and opportunity; being perceived as too emotional and as loyal to a fault; being perceived as a threat to male jobs; and having one's efforts sabotaged by male co-workers.

Other Problems. Other barriers mentioned by respondents in the expert and focus group interviews included a lack of family support, health-related problems, lack of communication skills, personality factors, job safety problems, and a fear of the unknown. Poorer working women are also plagued by transportation problems and the struggle to find a job they can get to if they do not have a car.

Conclusions

Considering the frequency that women reported various employment barriers and the perceived seriousness of these barriers by those who experience them, four types of problems emerge as most difficult. The first involves difficulties in locating and finding out about suitable employment opportunities, and it often is perceived as arising out of not knowing the right people. The second involves difficulties dealing with the dual career of homemaker and employee, and derives from problems related to family responsibilities, adequate and affordable day care for young children, and difficult working hours. The third involves problems related to real or perceived sex bias on the job and discriminatory hiring and promotion practices. And the fourth involves job benefits and insurance coverage.

II. WOMEN IN THE MISSOURI LABOR MARKET

A. Labor Market Data

The most basic requirement for the employment of women is a sufficient number of available job openings that are also appropriate to individual needs. Unfortunately, these are factors over which the would-be worker has the least control. The economic recession in the early 1980s, coupled with a realignment of jobs from the heavy industrial and farming sectors to the high-tech and service industries, has had an enormous impact on the number and types of jobs available for women. In addition, certain geographic areas in Missouri continue to experience high rates of unemployment, forcing many workers to relocate if they want to get a job.

Technological developments have also rendered certain types of skills obsolete. The introduction of office technology has tended to eliminate certain traditionally female clerical jobs, for example. The newer higher level technical jobs created by these changes have generally been taken by men not by the female workers who were displaced.

The types of low level jobs that are consistently available to women across the state--viz., in the food service industry, cleaning and janitorial work, and non-skilled health service (such as hospital and nursing home aides)--have a number of drawbacks. Frequently, only part-time work is available, the wages are extremely low (often below the poverty rate for a family of three), the working hours erratic or inconvenient, and there are often no fringe benefits such as health insurance or paid sick leave. These are also usually dead-end jobs with no room for advancement.

Examination of the best available information on the occupational distribution of women in the Missouri labor force led to several conclusions.

- Women in Missouri tend to occupy a rather narrow range of traditionally female dominated occupations such as secretarial and other clerical, food preparation and service, non skilled health, nursing, school teaching, and retail sales work. Nearly two-thirds of the female work force could be found in these occupational areas in 1980. This is illustrated in Tables 1 and 2. Our statewide survey of Missouri women did not reveal significant changes in this general picture for 1987.

The proportions of women in various occupational categories in Missouri was very similar to national estimates of the U.S. Census Bureau for most categories. For example, the original published census estimates show 10.9 percent of the national female labor force employed as secretaries, stenographers or typists; this can be compared to 10.5 percent in Missouri.

Similarly, financial records occupations showed 4.7 percent nationally and 4.8 in Missouri. Nationally 4.5 percent of the working women were elementary and pre-kindergarten teachers as compared to 4.7 percent in Missouri. Women sales workers in retail and personal service jobs nationally amounted to 8.2 percent; in Missouri this was 8.1 percent. Concerning the distribution of women in occupational categories, Missouri appears be an average state.

- This pattern holds true with some variation in substate regions. In some rural areas there were greater proportions of women in service occupations such as food preparation and serving and in traditionally female blue collar jobs such as textile, apparel and leather machine occupations. In urban areas and around the state capital there tended to be greater proportions within clerical occupations.

Table 1. Top Twenty Occupational Rankings For Missouri Women (1980)

Occupational Categories	Number of Women	Percent of Work Force	Missouri Median Income
Secretaries, Stenographers & Typists	99830	10.5	$ 9341
Administrative Support Occupations nec*	84152	8.9	9716
Sales Wkrs, Retail & Personnel Service	78328	8.3	7458
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	77226	8.1	6394
Records & Financial Rec Processing Occ	64333	6.8	9391
Teachers, Elementary and Secondary	57890	6.1	11456
Health Service, Non-Skilled Occupations	42592	4.5	7293
Textile, Apparel, Leather Machine Oper	30977	3.3	7122
Mgrs, Admin, & Supervisors nec	31327	3.3	11732
Health Assessment & Treating Occ	30980	3.3	14067
Personal Service Occupations	30473	3.2	7821
Cleaning & Bldg Serv Occ Except House	24516	2.6	7187
Other Professional nec	24011	2.5	11205
machine Operators nec	23832	2.5	9390
Fabricators & Assemblers, Handwork	22763	2.4	9416
Laborers	20161	2.1	8886
Health Technologists & Technicians	19233	2.0	10424
Duplicating, Mail & Communication Occ	13194	1.4	14402
Sales Reps, Finance & Services	13173	1.4	11195
Material Record Sched, Distr Clerks nec	12704	1.3	9492
Total	801695	84.5	

* nec: not elsewhere classified

Table 2. Percentages of Missouri Women in Traditional Female Occupations

Census Estimates Taken from
Labor Market Information for Affirmative Action Programs

Occupational Categories	Percent of Female Work Force
Clerical: Secretaries, Stenographers, Typists Administrative Support Occupations, nec., and Records and Financial Processing Occupations	26.2%
Service: Food Preparation and Serving Occupations, Non-skilled Health Service Occupations, Personal Service Occupations, Cleaning and Building Service Occupations (except house)	18.4%
Sales Workers, Retail and Personal Service	8.3%
Teacher, Elementary and Secondary	6.1%
Health Assessment and Treating	3.3%
Total	62.3%

- o The jobs that females occupy in greatest numbers, such as clerical and service occupations, are lower paying in comparison to the occupations that are male dominated. At the time of the 1980 census clerical and service occupations typically had incomes that averaged less than $10,000 annually for the full time worker.

- o Women are paid less on the average in practically all occupational categories in the state. Women who are able to find employment in traditionally male occupational areas may be paid more when compared to other women, but they often earn less on the average when compared to men in the same occupational grouping. These kinds of differences are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Missouri Male and Female Median Incomes For Selected Occupational Areas (1980)

Occupation	Male Median Income	Female Median Income	Income Ratio Men/Women
Fabricators and Assemblers, handwork	$15,148	$9,416	1.60/1
Cleaning and Building Service occ. ex. House	10,322	7,187	1.43/1
Machine Operators, nec	13,957	9,390	1.48/1
Material, Sched., and Dist. Clerks, nec	13,632	9,492	1.44/1

B. Labor Market Status of Women Surveyed

Of the women responding to the telephone survey, 69 percent were currently employed. All but four percent reported that they had worked for pay at some time previously. Seventeen percent were currently looking for a job. The major occupational categories of survey respondents are shown in Figure 7. Forty percent worked or had worked in clerical or sales occupations and 18 percent worked in service jobs. Twenty-eight percent held or had held professional, technical or managerial positions. (A majority of the women in this category were primary or secondary school teachers, or registered nurses.)

Income. Seven out of ten respondents reported some current personal income. (Figure 8 shows the distribution of personal income.) Thirty percent reported no income. Twelve percent had a personal income of less than $3,000--in a few cases this consisted of AFDC payments--and 18 percent reported an income of $5,000 or less. Six percent indicated an income greater than $25,000. The median income of all respondents who reported some income from any source was $10,839. The median income of respondents who were currently employed was $12,558. And the median income of those who were currently working full time was $14,483.

The distribution of household income reported by respondents is shown in Figure 9.

C. Characteristics of Missouri Women Associated with Occupational and Income Differences.

Based on data gathered in the statewide survey factors were examined that were most strongly associated with differences in total family income and with traditionally female, low paying occupations. Having less than a high school education, being

Figure 7.
Major Occupational Categories (Survey)

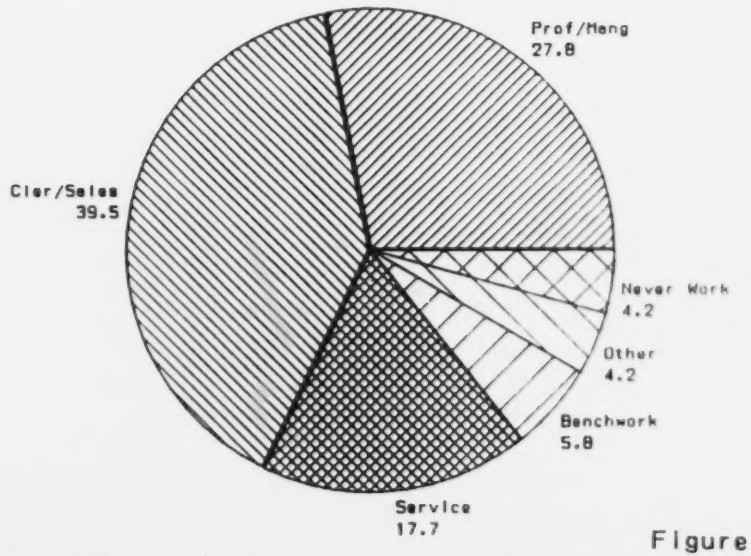


Figure 8.
Reported Personal Income of Respondents

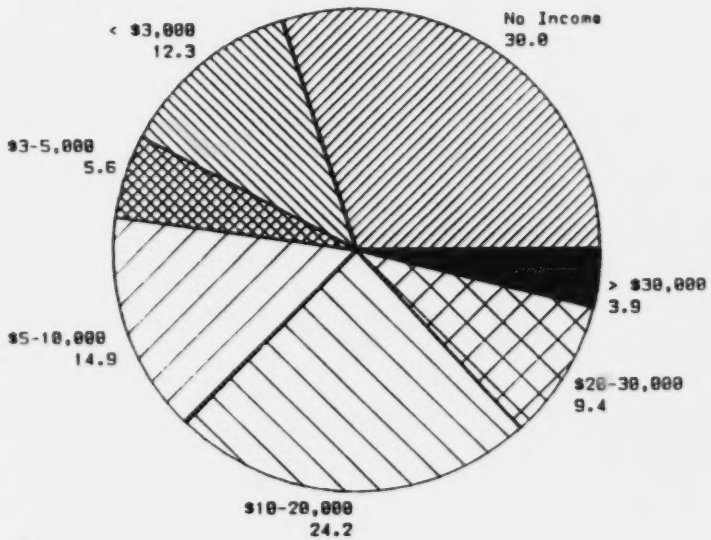
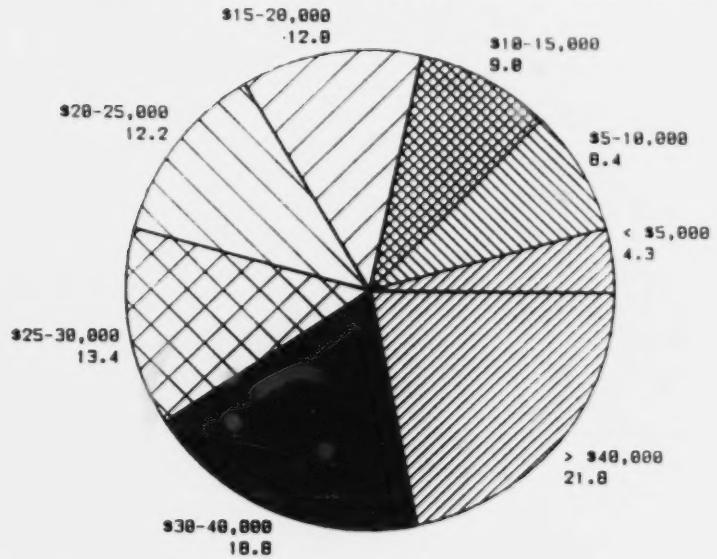


Figure 9.
Household Income of Respondents (Survey)



single (divorced, separated, widowed or never married), having dependent children, being black, and living in a rural locale all tended to be associated with low income or having a clerical or service occupation. And, of course, women who were unemployed or employed only part-time tended to have lower incomes and tended to have been employed in the less lucrative occupations.

Women who shared in two or more of these characteristics tended to have a worse employment and income status. Women who were unmarried and also responsible for dependent children had a worse status than either women who were unmarried or women with children. Uneducated female heads of household tended to be worse off than female heads of households generally.

Table 4 shows the proportions of women in the sample who had incomes above and below $10,000. It is apparent that single women with dependent children were much more likely to have household incomes in the poverty range. In this sample over two-thirds fell into the under $10,000 category as compared to about 10 percent of women who were not in a similar situation. The relationships were even stronger for such women who also lacked a high school education and who were black.

There are many women with these characteristics in Missouri. Female heads of household as a percentage of all families were found to range from five to ten percent in most substate areas. This is a substantial number of women, upwards of 100,000, statewide. Forty percent of these families are in poverty. Furthermore, looking only at all poor families as a group, a substantial percentage, in the range of 20 to 40 percent in substate areas, are headed by a single woman. Women with less than 12 years of education ranged from one-third of the women over 25 years of age in some parts of the state to over one-half in others.

Table 4. Household Income Level for Target Groups

Household Income	Female Single Head of Household***		Female Single Head of Household/less than H.S. Education***		Black Female Single Head of Household/less than H.S. Education***	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Less than $10000	35.6%	10.2%	85.8%	11.3%	89.7%	11.8%
More than $10000	64.4%	89.8%	14.2%	88.7%	10.3%	88.2%

*** p .0001

III. Education and Training

The respondents in most phases of this study frequently mentioned problems relating to job preparedness issues: education, skill training, and work experience. A number of the expert respondents interviewed were themselves involved in providing skill training and had strong feelings about its importance for many women. The problems associated with a lack of job preparation was seen as particularly crucial for women from lower socio-economic situations, where the women were more likely to be under-educated and sometimes more poorly educated.

There are two major federal- and state-funded sources of employment-related training services available to residents of Missouri. These are: 1) the programs administered by the state Division of Adult and Vocational Education, which include regionally operated vocational-technical training programs, adult basic education programs, and Carl Perkins programs; and 2) Job Training Partnership Act programs administered and operated by the state Division of Job Development and Training and 15 regional JTPA Administrative Entities. In addition, the Missouri Division of Employment Security, while not primarily involved in training-related activities, is an important source of job services to state residents.

There are also a large number of career and professional programs offered by the state's Colleges and Universities. Beyond these, there are many local and non-public sources of employment-related and supportive services. These include occupational training programs available through proprietary schools, apprenticeship and labor-union related programs, employer-based on-the-job training and employee assistance programs, and a wide variety of training and support services provided by local community-based organizations and community action agencies.

The focus of this part is primarily on the employment and training services available through public programs in the state.

A. The Division of Adult and Vocational Education

Vocational Education. The major provider of vocational education and training in the state is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Adult and Vocational Education. According to data gleaned from the Vocational Education Data System, there were 107,913 individuals enrolled in adult slots in courses offered at these vocational educational institutions during the 1986 school year. Slightly more than half of these students (51%) were women.

Around the state the training that women received in the Vocational Education system was concentrated principally in areas relevant to the types of jobs that women occupy in the Missouri

labor market. The areas of heaviest concentration for women were in the clerical and office areas such as secretarial, accounting and bookkeeping, areas related to business data processing, typing and general office courses. Together with the nursing, allied health, child care and guidance, food production and management and home economics areas these accounted for 62.8 percent of the female students within adult and postsecondary vocational education classes. Six other areas that are generally nontraditional accounted for another 10.3 percent. These were agricultural production, personnel and training programs, electrical and electronic technologies, industrial equipment maintenance and repair and criminal justice.

The Carl Perkins Program. The Carl Perkins Program is administered by the Division of Adult and Vocational Education of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The purpose of Carl Perkins funds is to augment existing vocational education services and activities to better meet the special needs of and improve accessibility to certain targeted groups. These groups include academically and economically disadvantaged individuals, adults who are in need of training and retraining, individuals who are single parents or homemakers, and persons who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in vocational education.

There were approximately $15.6 million in Carl Perkins funds available to Missouri during the 1987 fiscal year. Services provided to participants through the Carl Perkins program include vocational guidance, counseling, career development and placement in vocational education programs. In addition, vocational assessment/evaluation and vocational orientation is available through the program.

Each of the Area Vocational Technical Schools in the state and each Community College receive some funds to operate programs of sex equity which involve men and women in nontraditional areas of vocational training. In addition, each of these schools as well as seven Regional Centers also have vocational education programs targeted to single parents and displaced homemakers. Approximately $1.3 million of the Carl Perkins funds is available for programs for single parents and homemakers and slightly more than $.5 million is available for the sex equity program. It is estimated that 10,000 individuals participated in these programs during FY 1987.

Adult Basic Education. Another program administered by the Division of Adult and Vocational Education is the Adult Basic Education program. While not directly an employment and training service, basic education is often a condition for the possibility of employment for many individuals who have been either seriously under-educated. The linkage between basic skills and employability has most recently been made, and eloquently, by the Governor of Missouri in discussing the Learnfare initiative and the needs of AFDC recipients.

Most JTPA programs offer some kind of basic or remedial education activity to clients who need it as part of their services. Such services are provided through a close working relationship with one or more ABE programs in their Service Delivery Area. In many locations these programmatic relationships have been in place since the days of the CETA program stretching back into the 1970's.

B. Proprietary Schools

Vocational instruction is also available from a large number of private, proprietary schools throughout the state. Forty percent of the students enrolled in courses at schools responding to surveys were women. Proprietary schools were asked to indicate the types of employment-related services they provided. A large percentage reported that they provided general placement assistance, referrals for specific jobs with area employers, job search training, and resume preparation. Many schools also indicated providing vocational and job counseling, career planning, and aptitude and vocational testing services.

C. Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

A major source of employment and training services to individuals who are economically disadvantaged is the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Program. JTPA is largely a decentralized program administered by relatively autonomous regional Administrative Entities. In Missouri, there are 15 Administrative Entities, each responsible for its own Service Delivery Area, but all providing a similar set of services and employment-related activities. Oversight of regional JTPA programs and coordination assistance is provided through the Division of Job Development and Training (DJDT) and the Missouri Job Training Coordinating Council.

There are two separate Titles of JTPA that provide funding for employment and training programs in the state: Title II (A and B) and Title III. Title IIA is the largest source of funds and supports the central core of JTPA programs. Title IIB is the source of funds for the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Title III is the source of special programming for dislocated workers.

To be eligible for JTPA programs funded under Title II individuals must be economically disadvantaged, with family incomes at or below the official poverty level or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level. Economically disadvantaged individuals who are receiving cash welfare payments under federal, state or local programs are also eligible, as well as food stamp recipients, foster children receiving public state or local government cash support; and handicapped individuals with limited means.

Activities. Each of the Administrative Entities operates a multi-activity program with its Title IIA funds. The major activities include: classroom skill training, on-the-job training, job-search training, work experience, exemplary youth activities, remedial training, placement services and support services. During the 1986 fiscal year, the 15 programs provided services to 22,162 clients through Title IIA; 10,854 (49%) of these participants were women.

Statewide, men were more apt to be placed in on-the-job training situations than women. On the other hand, women were more often placed in classroom skill training programs than men. This tendency to place men in on-the-job training and women in classroom skill training is not peculiar to Missouri, but has been noted in nationwide research on the JTPA program as well as its predecessor, CETA.

An analysis was conducted of the classroom skill training provided to 2,672 men and women who participated in Title IIA JTPA programs throughout the state during the latter part of 1986 and early 1987. Table 5 shows the proportions of these men and women who were provided training in areas classified as either nontraditional for women or as traditional/mixed.

Table 5. Women and Men in JTPA Classroom Training Classified as Traditional/ Nontraditional for Women. (N=432)

Type of Occupation	Women	Men
Nontraditional	10.5	72.5
Traditional/Mixed	89.5	27.5

As can be seen in the table, most of the training provided to women was in areas classified as traditional/mixed. These largely included business and office education and health occupations. A minority of male participants received training in these areas. On the other hand, a small proportion of women were given classroom training in areas that would be considered nontraditional for women, training areas in which men are more likely to be placed.

Job Placements. An analysis was also conducted of the jobs these 2,672 participants obtained upon completing the JTPA program. Approximately two-thirds of the female participants (63.8 percent) were placed in the clerical and service areas, in which in large part the traditionally female occupations are found. This compares with less than one-third (29.6 percent) of the male participants. Men tend to predominate in the more

traditionally male occupations such as structural, machine trades and processing. However, the proportion of women placed by JTPA in nontraditional blue collar jobs is higher than might be expected for the general population.

Table 6 shows the average starting wages of men and women in the study. Notice that men and women earned comparable wages on the average in the traditional/mixed category. In the nontraditional category, however, the women averaged somewhat less than the men. The nontraditional jobs, which were largely occupied by men (75.3 percent), brought almost $1 per hour more to the male workers but about half that to the female workers over the traditional/mixed category. However, the female worker on the average in the nontraditional jobs earned more than either the men or women in the traditional/mixed group.

Table 6. Wages of JTPA Completers in Nontraditional Jobs

Occupational Category	Average Starting Wage	Number	Percent
Non-Traditional (for women)			
Women	$4.48	327	24.6
Men	$4.94	999	75.3
Total	$4.83	1326	
Traditional and Mixed			
Women	$4.03	1030	69.9
Men	$4.06	444	30.1
Total	$4.04	1474	
Total All Types	$4.41	2800	

Title III Dislocated Worker Program. Through Title III of the JTPA, the state is able to target services for workers who have been permanently laid off due to job cutbacks or plant shutdowns. The Department of Economic Development and the Division of Job Development and Training are the agencies designated by the Governor to administer local and state programs using Title III funds to assist eligible dislocated workers.

Services provided are essentially the same as the set of activities funded under Title IIA (except for youth services). These services are offer statewide in each of the 15 SDAs. During the first 11 months of FY 1987, there have been 5,863 participants in the dislocated worker program statewide. Of these, 2,697 (46%) were women. The entered employment rate for program completers has been 80 percent and the average entry wage $6.17.

D. Division of Employment Security

Job Services. The Missouri Division of Employment Security (DES) is the provider of job services authorized through the Wagner-Peyser Act. Its principal function is to provide a labor-exchange service for employers and workers in each section of the state. An automated system has been developed to accomplish this. Workers who apply to DES offices are matched in terms of their experiences, skills, vocational interests, wage requirements and the times and places they can work with employers who list jobs and worker qualifications with the agency. In addition, job applicants can receive vocational counseling and aptitude testing through DES. The agency can also provide worker screening and testing at an employer's work site. Every resident of the state is able to access the basic Wagner-Peyser job services provided by DES at each of its offices at no cost; that is, the labor exchange service, job-related counseling, and performance and aptitude testing.

DES offices across the state have also provided other employment and training services at various times. Some offices have been contractors with JTPA Administrative Entities in the past in providing intake, eligibility determination, assessment, job placement, job development, and administration of the on-the-job training program.

During the 1986 program year, 488,800 residents of the state sought some services from the Division of Employment Security (including job services and unemployment insurance benefits). Forty-five percent were women statewide. Similarly, 45 percent of all job referrals and 45 percent of all the individuals placed on jobs were women. A somewhat smaller percentage of the individuals who were counseled, provided job search assistance and job development services were women; a slightly higher percentage of women received testing services.

The types of jobs in which DES applicants were placed varied greatly, but can be grouped into the broad categories shown in Table 7. This table shows the number of people placed in nine occupational categories by DES during the 1986 program year. It shows the large proportions of clients placed in clerical, sales and service occupations. The table also breaks down this placement information by sex. It shows the proportions of male and female clients placed in the nine broad occupational groupings during the 1986 program year. As can be seen, two-thirds of the women placed obtained jobs in clerical, sales and service occupations. On the other hand, one-third of the male clients were placed in these types of jobs.

Table 7. Occupational Groupings of DES Job Placements by Sex during the 1986 Program Year.

Occupational Groupings	Total Placed	Percent Women	Percent Men
Professional, Technical, Managerial	2,352	2.42%	1.62%
Clerical and Sales Occupations	26,682	32.41	14.84
Service Occupations	30,320	33.02	19.62
Agriculture, Fishery, Forestry	2,389	.52	3.05
Processing Occupations	5,170	3.80	4.67
Machine Trades Occupations	4,973	2.26	5.51
Benchwork Occupations	11,491	13.19	7.09
Structural Work Occupations	8,278	8.54	11.27
Miscellaneous Occupations	28,435	11.73	32.33

Conclusion

Existing employment and training programs in Missouri benefit a large number of women throughout the state. There remain, however, many men and women who for one reason or another are not eligible for such programs, are not considered appropriate clients or require more services than are currently available.

One of the consequences of the change from CETA to JTPA has been that many of the most severely disadvantaged have been excluded from services. Others find themselves unable to be admitted because they lack basic skills required by some programs. While women make up about half of the participant population of the JTPA program, they are more likely to receive classroom skill training than on-the-job training. Learning a marketable skill is a good thing in itself and can lead to a satisfactory job placement. But this places an additional step between them and an employer, and women frequently express difficulty taking that last step. Women need the opportunity to benefit from direct training with employers and to show employers what they can do at least as much as men do.

An effort is made in the JTPA program to provide women opportunities to receive training in nontraditional occupations. However, by and large, the vocational and occupational training provided to men and women in public and private schools around the state reinforces the sex segregation of jobs found in the labor market. While there are women who obtain training in occupational areas considered nontraditional, most continue to receive training in areas in which females predominate: clerical and other services, health-related professions, and so-called "pink" collar occupations. An important characteristic of jobs that are traditionally filled with women workers is that they tend to pay less than jobs traditionally held by men.

IV. The Broader Context

The primary objective of this study was to document the types of problems the women of Missouri face in finding work and in advancing in their jobs. In the end, the kinds of barriers that were found were consistent with the findings of other research addressing this issue. In order to consider more effectively the implications of this project, and possible programmatic and policy initiatives, it may be wise to consider the findings within the broader context of previous, related work.

Education and Training

In order for women to have access to better jobs, they must be able to obtain the education and training necessary to qualify for them. And in fact, available statistics show that, nationwide, working women and men now have comparable rates of education: women are slightly more likely to finish high school, and men more likely to complete four years of college, but both groups have 12.6 median years of education (Larwood and Gutek, 1984). There are, however, important differences in the curricula studied by men and women, with the majority of women earning their college degrees in the fields of education, the humanities, and the health sciences or pursuing vocational training in homemaking, retailing, or health fields (Harlan, 1985; U.S. Census, 1986; Fox and Hesse-Biber, 1984; Stolz, 1985). Hence, women tend to study the fields aligned with the poorer-paying, lower-status occupations in health, education, and the human services. Moreover, there is evidence that career counselors systematically withhold information from women concerning possible career options because of their own biases regarding women's involvement in careers (cf. Mishler, 1975).

The relation between education and employment is by no means a straightforward one. Statistics do often show a correlation between higher education and higher incomes (U.S. Census, 1986). While education and years of work experience are good predictors of men's incomes, this is not necessarily the case with women (Mueller, 1982). The data show that more than one-fifth of working women are overeducated for their jobs (Stolz, 1985), and that, for example among civil service employees, women are better educated than the men with whom they are in the same federal government occupational categories (Benokraitis, 1979). At the least, education is not an automatic key to a good job. Some intervening factors are the quality of the education, the existence of job opportunities, and discrimination by employers. But education <u>can</u> make a big impact on a woman's self-esteem and, in turn, her perception of herself as a potential employee. The author of one study found that women have a tendency to equate education with one's ability to perform on the job; thus, even women with highly developed craft skills think that because they do not have much formal education, they cannot do anything

(Stolz, 1985). Another study noted that women are more likely than men to overprepare, such as through obtaining additional schooling, before making changes in the job market (Larwood and Gutek, 1984). Whether or not there is a direct relation between job success and the skills learned in school, it must be recognized that one's perception that her education as inadequate serves to reinforce feelings of low self-esteem and self-confidence, and thus will present a barrier to obtaining a good job.

Nontraditional Work

One possible strategy to improve women's employment and income status is to encourage women to enter nontraditional crafts and skilled trades. However, various studies have pointed out impediments at every step along the way. To begin with, there has been evidence that high school and vocational counselors seldom inform female students of the availability of apprenticeship opportunities (Seidman, 1978). Older women who express interest in this type of training frequently run into problems such as maximum age requirements for enrollment in apprenticeship programs, entrance preferences given to veterans, or program recruitment from vocational education programs or the shop floor where there are already few women. One study that examined CETA and JTPA vocational education programs documented a systematic bias in their enrollment of women in classroom training, which is primarily clerical, and men in OJT programs, which are mainly blue-collar trades (Harlan, 1985).

Even if a woman does succeed in entering an apprenticeship program, she is oftentimes subject to resistance from male co-workers and supervisors that reflect the discriminatory attitudes of the employer. In order for women to be successfully integrated into such male-dominated work environments, Harlan (1985) advocates a five-point strategy that has proven successful in the past: (1) recruitment targeted at women; (2) prior preparation for trade or technical programs that familiarize women with the tools and terminology; (3) child care support; (4) convincing employers to change employment practices that make it hard for women to operate in all-male work environments; and (5) after-training follow-up.

Unfortunately, none of these strategies has been incorporated into the legislation that established the JTPA program, and so the actual adoption of such a plan by individual employers is likely to be erratic, at best. But even those businesses that do implement equal employment policies can still have organizational barriers at the plant level that impede women's access to and advancement in traditionally male jobs. For example, a recent study of one large industrial firm showed that even though more women were being hired, these women were systematically assigned lower ports of entry and lower opportunity job ladders than men (Harlan and O'Farrell, 1982). Given these barriers, it comes as no surprise that female blue-

collar workers still tend to be concentrated in low-paying manufacturing rather than construction or crafts, transportation, and public utilities.

Networking

One of the strongest and, perhaps, most surprising findings of this study, is the extent to which women perceive and report employment problems arising out of their not knowing the right people--the perception of being outside the main channels of communication about jobs and job openings, and of seeing oneself forced to compete as an isolated individual against entrenched "old boy" networks.

It was in response to this perception that special women's networks began to appear throughout the country in the late 1970s. Most of these were formed as women began moving into middle and upper management positions but saw themselves as isolated emotionally and socially, and lacking in the necessary contacts to move further. Although networks have been organized in a variety of ways, all are established to provide opportunities for women to link up and share information, resources, support and advice in an effort to replicate the function of the "old boy" networks but in a more self-conscious and structured way.

There is a growing body of literature on networking by women, most of a very practical nature (Cf. M.S. Welch's Networking, which lists existing networks and C. Kleiman's Women's Networks).

Discrimination

The results of this study have documented that a large number of women in Missouri face, or, at least, perceive they face, discrimination in hiring, evaluation, and promotion practices. This finding is supported by substantial evidence from other research. In an excellent review of the current literature, Ann Harriman (1985) cites several studies documenting widespread sex-typing of jobs by employers, which results in either women or men being given preference in hiring for a particular position. The implication here is that most of this sex-typing is done according to traditional conceptions of what is appropriate work for women and for men, which in turn makes it difficult for women to break into nontraditional jobs.

This sex-typing practice by employers is most certainly one of the forces that keeps occupations so highly sex-segregated in our society. There is documentation of additional discriminatory factors that come into play when employers hire, including the gender of the manager's subordinates, the age of the applicants, their attractiveness, and even their choice of perfume (Harriman, 1985; Larwood and Gutek, 1984; Benokraitis, 1979). In general,

women seem to have the greatest difficulty gaining access to jobs that are perceived as masculine, to jobs that are seen as difficult or challenging, and to positions where the job description is ambiguous and the requirements are subjective (characteristics that are typical of upper level, supervisory, and managerial positions, in particular). In these cases, the decision maker must make more inferences, rely on less specific information about the applicant, and take more of a risk. Given this uncertainty, decision makers tend to hire a well-qualified male over an equally qualified female (Harriman, 1985; Larwood and Gutek, 1984).

Once a woman is hired, she may experience a whole different set of discriminatory practices. Studies have documented that women are more likely to be placed in unchallenging rather than challenging positions in an organization (which will in turn affect her opportunity to demonstrate her abilities) (Harriman, 1985), that women tend to be evaluated less favorably than men when a high level of competence is required (Larwood and Gutek, 1984), that women are held to higher levels of accountability than men (Larwood and Gutek, 1984), and that the emphasis on a woman's sex-role which often occurs when she is in a minority can result in her work accomplishments becoming invisible (Larwood and Gutek, 1984).

This last factor can be crucial at the management level where, according to Kanter (1977), the visibility of a woman's accomplishments is crucial for her attainment of a position of power. Moreover, women tend to be excluded from informal networks in male-dominated occupations (Miller, 1986)--at least in part because work has been so sex-segregated that many men are not accustomed to or comfortable interacting with women as colleagues--and have few mentor relationships with more powerful senior people. If Kanter's claim is true that women managers must have one of two bases for power--visible accomplishments or influential personal associations--then it is no surprise that the upper echelons of the business world continue to be almost exclusively male.

Another form that gender discrimination can take at all levels of employment is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can be defined as any unwanted pressure for sexual activity, including an array of behaviors ranging from suggestive comments and gestures to unwanted physical contact, rape, and attempted rape (Madden, 1985). According to the latest research, there are two situations in which sexual harassment is most likely to occur: when there is an uneven ratio of women to men within an occupation, job, or work group, and when there is a relationship of unequal power (Gutek, 1985; Madden, 1985). Larwood and Gutek (1984) also note that the rate of sexual harassment is strongly influenced by an organization's formal and informal norms. Research has documented that sexual harassment is widespread and affects women at work regardless of their age, marital status, occupation, or ethnic background (Madden, 1985; Larwood and Gutek, 1984; Gutek, 1985). And as long as work continues to

remain highly sex-segregated and men monopolize supervisory positions, there is no reason to expect that the problem will subside.

Personal Circumstances

As we have found in this study, a woman's employment is also affected by a number of barriers that stem from the woman's personal circumstances. A woman's access to a job depends upon available solutions to such practical problems as transportation to and from work and day care for children and the elderly. Research on WIN, vocational education, and CETA have consistently shown that child care assistance is a critical factor in women's ability to enroll in and complete job training and educational programs (Harlan, 1985). This can be particularly crucial to the employment prospects of the growing number of single mothers. Moreover, there is evidence that child day care may have an enduring positive effect on the intellectual development of economically disadvantaged children (Stolz, 1985). Paradoxically, however, the regulations for the JTPA program, in comparison to CETA, discourage funding for child care, and this at a time when other policies at the federal level have significantly reduced other sources of child care for low-income families (Harlan, 1985). Accessible and affordable day care is simply not available to a large number of women in this country (cf. Feinstein, 1979) and in this state.

Cultural Forces

Working women must also often confront relatives' and friends' disapproval of the woman's choice to work. Having grown up in a culture which emphasizes women's maternal and familial responsibilities, many women find it difficult to break out of the traditional social role of wife/mother, and those who do sometimes experience guilt and mental stress as a result (Stolz, 1985). It is not uncommon for husbands to resent their wife's employment, particularly when her paycheck is bigger than his (Stolz, 1985). Studies have also shown that even as the amount of women's paid employment rises, men have increased their housework participation only marginally, thus leaving working women with the additional burden of maintaining the household (England and Farkas, 1986).

Why Women Work

Despite all this, the participation of women in labor force has been steadily increasing. England and Farkas (1986) attribute the recent increase in women's employment to a number of factors, including changing sex-role socialization, later age at marriage, lowered fertility, high divorce rates, and rising monthly payments for houses. Certainly, the increased numbers of women seeking to re-enter the labor force after a period of full-

time unpaid work in the home has to do with divorced women's changing economic status: according to the Census Bureau, only 4 percent of 4.5 million divorced or separated women in 1975 received alimony, and only 30 percent of divorced mothers with pre-divorce incomes over $11,000 per year received no child support or alimony over a six-year period (Yohalem, 1980). Displaced homemakers such as these often have to deal with the additional serious barrier of not having any previous paid employment experience (Yohalem, 1980).

In any particular case there appear to be multiple reasons why a woman enters the labor force. Ultimately, however, most women work for the same reasons as most men do, and, in the final analysis it most often is a case of financial necessity.

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